

GWS 880: Proseminar in Graduate Gender and Women's Studies
Fall 2017

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Office Hours: Weds 12-1 and 4-4:30, 33xx Sterling Hall

This course offers a comprehensive introduction to graduate study in the inter- and multi-disciplinary field/s of Gender and Women's Studies. We will explore key areas of inquiry for the field of GWS as well as reflections upon its past, present, and future. Scholarly readings and assignments are designed to invite the practice of connecting theory and practice in as well as out of the classroom. We will also have the opportunity to learn about some primary sites of professional engagement for scholars and researchers such as colloquia, conferences, scholarly journals, edited collections and scholarly monographs. Ultimately, the seminar provides insight into the inspirations, limitations, potentials, coalitions and conflicts that generate feminist theory and action most broadly conceived.

Required Books: all books are available at Room of One's Own independent bookstore on Johnson St. All but the most recent books will be available there in used as well as new copy.

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

Sarah Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*

Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Newest edition or any used

Ellen Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*

Louise Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*

Eli Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*

Maggie Nelson, *Argonauts*

Janet Halley, *Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism*

In addition, we will read a handful of articles that will be sent electronically.

Accessibility:

*You may use laptops or reading devices in seminar if you need them for the sole purpose of accessing materials or taking notes. Please disable the internet connection during seminar.

*Everyone is welcome in this seminar and I am happy to make accommodations for disabilities. The McBurney Center provides useful documentation, and feel free to contact me if you'd like to discuss accommodations.

Course Requirements:

Regular attendance is of course required, as well as thorough completion of required readings and participation in a lively and thoughtful discussion.

Assignments: Most assignments are amenable to presentation in alternative formats. I encourage people to use and experiment with a variety of styles of written, visual, tactile, or sonic expression. We will discuss this in seminar and please be in consultation with me about your needs and interests.

Seminar Collaborative Co-facilitation:

The most important aspects of this seminar are discovering and articulating your own insights from your reading and maintaining open dialogue with others to collectively build greater insight. Everyone's perspectives are essential to this multi- and inter-disciplinary endeavor, not least because it is inherently transformative to become a group that includes sciences, humanities, social sciences, art, activism and life itself. You are encouraged to share your questions, and also to be aware of your impact on the overall discussion dynamic: is it well-balanced? do you and others feel comfortable enough to speak, even if you know that it might be stressful? If not, what can you do to facilitate a more open and respectful process of sharing and listening?

Consider yourselves to be co-facilitators of seminar dynamics: actively work to ensure that everyone is invited to share their perspectives; model an attitude of respect for all persons; facilitate communication if differences of perspective become stressful; and encourage engagement or break the ice if people in seminar are reluctant to speak. *It is everyone's responsibility to help each other be active collaborators; this is at the heart of our work in the seminar.*

Keywords and Thesis: For each author's work, write a concise and clear thesis statement. Also develop up to three keywords that best signal what for you are the most compelling or central aspects in the reading, and a sentence or two about why. You must bring these to seminar on the day we read the authors' works.

Who Are These Authors?: Each week, two people present brief author reports designed to help us better understand the authors' contexts and interests, and contributions to feminist theory and practice.

Transporting Dialogues: This assignment asks you to critically engage works by faculty in GWS at UW, and to write brief reviews that devote particular attention to ways that their methodological, and/or theoretical, and/or topical content would be relevant or useful to scholars in other fields. *You will receive a more detailed assignment sheet separately.*

Book Review: This assignment asks you to write a formal book review essay (1,500-2,000 words). You may choose among Ahmed, Samuels, Clare, Nelson, and Hailey. *You will receive a more detailed assignment sheet separately.*

"Conference" Presentation and Participation: This assignment gives you the opportunity to present something of your own to the seminar in a conference paper or poster format (10-12 minute maximum), and to receive questions and feedback from peers as a formal conference audience. As an audience member, you will also

have the opportunity to practice listening and forming dialogue-continuing questions. You may schedule your presentation for any week in the semester except for October 18. *You will receive a more detailed assignment sheet separately.*

Class Schedule

September 6, Introduction: Transforming Feminist Dialogues

Arvin, Tuck, and Morrill, "Decolonizing Feminism" (*Feminist Formations* 2013)
Finn Enke, "Introduction" to *Transfeminist Perspectives*
Dutta and Roy, "Decolonizing Transgender in India"

Sept 13 Multi- and Inter-disciplinary Feminist Studies, Part 1

Hailey, *Split Decisions* "Part I"

GWS Faculty: Find, select and read at least one article (or book chapter or book) written by two current members of the UW GWS faculty.

"Transporting Dialogues" assignment due.

Sept 20 Multi- and Inter-disciplinary Feminist Studies, Part 2

GWS Faculty: Find, select and read at least one article (or book chapter or book) written by three current members of the UW GWS faculty.

Your Choice: Select one article (or chapter or book) in your area of interest, and include this in your

"Transporting Dialogues" assignment due.

Sept 27 Theories and Practices 1

Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

Oct 4 Theories and Practices 2

Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera*

Oct 11 Theories and Practices 3

Sarah Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*

Oct 18 Feminist Perspectives On Being (Something) and Speaking As (sth)

Stone, "Identity in Oshkosh"

Stone, "The Empire Strikes Back: A Post-transsexual Manifesto"

Jenkins, "Vagina Dialogues"

Joy Ladin, "I Am Not Not Me: Unmaking and Remaking Language of the Self"

Enke, "The Education of Little Cis"

Oct 25 Nation-Making (Disability, Race, Gender)

Samuels, *Fantasies of Identification*

Nov 1 "Cure" I

Clare, *Brilliant Imperfection*

Nov 8 "Cure" II

Erdrich, *Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*

Nov 15 Social Bodies in Theory and Practice

Nelson, *Argonauts*

Nov 22 NO SEMINAR MEETING

Nov 29 The Limits and Beyond of Feminism

Hailey, *Split Decisions*

Dec 6 Transforming Dialogues Part II

This seminar gives us the opportunity to build connections across disparate feminist contexts and life as it is. No new reading. Prior to the seminar, develop some dialogue among at least three of our authors. We will discuss the format of this meeting in prior weeks.

Dec 13 LAST SEMINAR MEETING